# Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter Fondly Recalled the Flying Santa

BY: **AMERICAN LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION** PUBLISHED: DECEMBER 23, 2018

Marla Rogers spent her childhood as a lightkeeper's daughter. When Marla was seven years old, her father – Archford "Ted" Vernon Haskins, was appointed keeper of Owls Head Light Station. Keeper Haskins and his family served at Owls Head Light from 1947 to 1953.

Marla (1940-2014), who later in life volunteered at Owls Head Lighthouse during open houses, often would tell people, "This is home to me." One of her favorite stories that she would share with the visitors during tours of the lighthouse was about the Flying Santa.

Since Christmas is upon us, we thought it would be appropriate to recall Marla Rogers' memories of the Flying Santa.



**Marla Rogers called Owls Head Light home from 1947 to 1953. (ALF archives)**

"When we came to Owls Head Light in 1947, the



**Archford "Ted" Vernon Haskins**
**(ALF archives)**

one thing that was a real surprise was at Christmastime we had an in-person visit from Edward Rowe Snow, the Flying Santa.

Typically, a few weeks before Christmas, the Flying Santa would find out how many people were on the isolated lighthouses, and even though Owls Head was not that isolated, he counted us in as well.

He would find out how many were in the family…the keeper, his wife, and how many children, including how many boys and how many girls. The Flying Santa would wrap up the packages, load them in the plane, and then he would go out and 'buzz' the islands.

Flying Santa would 'buzz' the lighthouse until the keeper and his family would come out to see what was going on. Then he would come in as low as he dared and drop the packages out of the plane. Afterwards, Flying Santa would tip his wings and away he would go on to the next lighthouse.



I know at Owls Head Light, every year we looked forward to Flying Santa's visit. My dad would tell us about two weeks before Christmas. He'd say, 'be listening.' And we would be hoping it would not happen while we were in school.

We never missed it though. We always listened, and then we would hear Flying

Santa's plane and run and get dad – and out he would come. What a treat it was… candy, books, hand-knit mittens, puzzles, etc.!"

**Edward Rowe Snow, the Flying Santa (ALF archives)**

An Associated Press story about the Flying Santa's visit to Owls Head Lighthouse in December 1947 was picked up by newspapers across the country. The Salt Lake City Tribune ran the story in their December 15, 1947 edition.

An excerpt of their story is below…

**Flying Santa Remembers Lighthouses**



**Later in life, Marla Rogers would volunteer at Owls Head Light, and one of the many stories she would share with visitors was that of the Flying Santa. (Photo by Bob Trapani, Jr.)**

Rockland, Me., Dec. 14 (AP) – Edward Rowe Snow, New England's flying Santa Claus, dropped 46 gift packages Sunday at isolated lighthouses and Coast Guard stations between Boston and Mount Desert Rock on the first trip of a Canada-to-Florida Christmas mission.

Snow dropped a wreath into Rockland Harbor in memory of Capt. Bill Wincapaw, his predecessor and originator of the flying Santa run, who died in the air here last summer.

Six children of Archford V. Haskins, Owls Head lightkeeper, supplied the flying Santa with hot coffee and snacks at a party for which he paused in his chilly flight.




**Edward Rowe Snow's Owls Head Party, Dec. 1947. Lightkeeper Archford V. Haskins, dressed in his uniform, is seated next to the Flying Santa – Edward Rowe Snow.**
**(ALF archives)**